A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

Connections

April 2009

Pilot Sees Both Sides of Work Zone Crashes

by Matt Hiebert

It's 10:45 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4, when the alarm sounds throughout the helicopter base in St. Robert. Someone is in bad enough shape to need an airborne ambulance. Pilot Andy Schmidt along with a flight nurse and paramedic take their place in the Life Line helicopter. In moments they are flying to another accident scene. They rarely know how serious the situation will be until they arrive, but one thing's for sure – there may be lives in jeopardy.

Schmidt has seen it all in his 15 years of piloting a Life Line helicopter, including farmers trapped under tractors, cars torn in half, lives lost forever because of a single moment of inattention. At least 20 of these calls have been to work zone crashes in Missouri.

When looking over all the work zone responses, Schmidt sees a common thread tying them together. "Good people who have qualified to have a drivers' license are either distracted or just not paying attention."

Bob Edwards

St. John's Life Line Pilot Andy Schmidt has experienced work zone accidents from two perspectives: as an emergency responder and as a victim. He will be featured in upcoming radio spots to promote work zone safety.

Andy Schmidt has been more than just an emergency responder to work zone tragedy though. In 2001, he, his wife and two sons were the victims of a work zone crash.

"I'd just gotten a new job and we were headed to Lebanon on Interstate 44," Schmidt recalls. "There was bridge work going on in front of us and traffic was backed up a couple of miles." In the corner of his eye, Schmidt saw the driver behind him quickly pull over to the shoulder. Schmidt glanced up to see what was going on. "I only saw the grill of a car in my rear view mirror."

The impact was immediate. While the driver behind him avoided the collision, Schmidt and his family could not. The inattentive driver never even hit his brakes and struck the Schmidt family at 70 miles per hour.

"Our first trip to Lebanon was to the emergency room," Schmidt said. Fortunately no one was killed – a fact which Schmidt credits to divine oversight and seat belts – but the repercussions continue to this day. His wife, who was an avid aerobics participant before the accident, suffered injury to her hips that will never fully heal. His sons, ages three and six, would have to undergo months of treatment for neck and back injuries.

Schmidt kept a running tally of their hundreds of trips to doctors, the lost hours in

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Safety Partners Rally for Stronger Safety Belt Law

by Revee White

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety and safety belt partners from around the state gathered March 4 at the Capitol to support HB 665, a stronger safety belt law in Missouri estimated to save 90 lives in its first year.

"It's exciting to see such statewide support for this life-saving initiative," said Dale Findlay, executive director of the Missouri Safety Council, a coalition partner. "This bill will decrease the number of needless deaths occurring on Missouri roads."

Nearly 70 percent of people who die in Missouri traffic crashes are not wearing a safety belt. Amending Missouri's current seat belt law will save lives and prevent 1,000 serious injuries each year. In addition, Missouri would be eligible for a one-time incentive grant of $16-20 million.

Of more than 500 Missouri traffic laws, the current safety belt law is the only one that has a secondary enforcement provision – a driver must be stopped for another reason before they can be cited for a safety belt violation.

"You can be pulled over for a burned out taillight or outdated tags, but not for endangering your life and the lives of others by driving without a safety belt," said Findlay.

More than 250 organizations and 2,000 individuals throughout the state have signed

Wes Farris

Dozens of supporters gathered at the State Capitol on March 4 to show their support for a stronger primary safety belt law.

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MoDOT Offers Another Way to Share Transportation Information

Being an open and transparent state agency, MoDOT is always looking for new ways to communicate with our customers. Recently, MoDOT launched a new podcast designed to provide Missourians with the latest updates on transportation. The podcast features Director Pete Rahn discussing a new transportation-related topic each week. The podcasts are available every Monday at *www.modot.org/modotpodcast* or can be subscribed to through iTunes.

So far, topics discussed have included primary safety belt, Overdrive Magazine's poll that ranks Missouri's roads as among the nation's most improved, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and MoDOT's First-in-the-Nation economic recovery project.

Cathy Morrison

Although the content has been packaged as a podcast, it is also being provided in a higher-quality version for radio stations to download as sound bites.

Commissioners Kehoe and Gach Named Chair, Vice-Chair

photos by Cathy Morrison

New leadership was named at the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission meeting March 4 in Jefferson City. Mike Kehoe, Jefferson City, was named chairman. David Gach, St. Joseph, will serve as vice chairman. Kehoe and Gach have both served on the commission since 2005, with terms ending in 2011.

They replace Duane Michie, Hayti, and Jim Anderson, Springfield, whose terms ended March 1. Both Michie and Anderson will remain on the commission until Gov. Jay Nixon names their replacements.

"This is an exciting, but challenging time to take over as the commission's chair," Kehoe said. "We're fortunate to have received federal economic stimulus funding that will allow us to move ahead with some necessary transportation projects. At the same time, we're experiencing declining state and federal funding for transportation, which means we'll have to determine how to provide a quality transportation system to Missourians in the future."

Kehoe owns and operates auto dealerships in Jefferson City and Columbia. Gach is owner and president of a diesel repair business in St. Joseph. He also manages a land excavation company and owns commercial property and farmland.

Other commission members are Rudy Farber, Neosho, and Grace Nichols, St. Charles.

Mike Kehoe, chairman

David Gach, vice-chairman

Five Things To Tell Your Neighbors About Safety In Work Zones

As the winter months come to a close, warmer weather will mean more roadway construction across the state. When dealing with work zones and traffic, take a deep breath, whistle a happy tune and remember these tips. You can even tell your neighbors, making for a more harmonious and musical drive to and from work for all.

Cathy Morrison

1. **Expect Delays** - To improve roads, we need work zones, which sometimes lead to traffic delays. Instead of getting frustrated, turn these delays into a productive use of time: sing your favorite song, practice a dance with your seat belt on, or argue with the evening drive DJs. Planning your travel time accordingly can reduce stress that often leads to dangerous aggressive driving behavior and "road rage." Check *www.modot.org* for current construction locations and detours.
2. **Be Aware And Watch For Signs** (You know, those orange things telling you what to do.) - These signs are hard to miss, with them being orange and all. Keep your eyes on the road and let the kids enjoy "Finding Nemo" for the fiftieth time. Detours or lane closures may change daily as traffic patterns in work zones are adjusted according to work being conducted and completed.
3. **Follow The Speed Limit** - (Unless you're just dying to spend some of your money on a speeding ticket.) - Speed limits in work zones can differ from normal limits and should be obeyed as workers may be just a few feet away from open lanes of traffic. Be safe, and keep them safe.
4. **Be Conscientious** (Listen to your Jiminy Cricket.) - Always remember that workers may be present even if you don't see them. Proceed with caution and stay within the speed limit.
5. **Be Extra Careful At Night** – All sorts of things can come out at night, including construction crews. Construction is often performed late at night to avoid lane closures during peak traffic hours. However, reduced driver visibility can be a danger to workers. To avoid further visibility degradation, turn on your headlights – they tend to help.

SAVE THE DATE

A fundraiser for the fallen worker's memorial

Ride for Remembrance

Saturday, June 13, 2009

Join us on a poker-style motorcycle run. One ride will begin in the St. Louis area, other locations to be determined.

Tentative plans also include a barbeque, 5K race and other activities at the Jefferson City stop.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Mollie LeBlanc at Mollie.LeBlanc@modot.mo.gov or 314-340-4202 or Norm Gentry at Norman.Gentry@modot.mo.gov or 314-340-4399.

This will be an alcohol-free event.

To find out more about the memorial, visit the Honor Our Own page on MoDOT's intranet.

Painting the State Orange to Promote Work Zone Safety

Spring has sprung and so has another busy construction season for MoDOT. This year, there will be an increasing number of bridge closures, thanks to our Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Plan, and additional projects accelerated due to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

As the weather and the work begin to heat up, MoDOT is planning several ways to remind motorists to drive safely in highway work zones. This campaign will once again kick off with Operation Orange, MoDOT's signature effort to promote safety in work zones. The promotion will start in conjunction with National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week held April 6-10.

Last year, more than 70 buildings and landmarks throughout the state were orange or donned safety messages to highlight the need to drive safely in work zones.

We expect even more partners will join in the efforts to paint Missouri orange in 2009. New to look for this year will be signs or displays at welcome centers across the state, thanks to the Missouri Division of Tourism, and work zone safety messages at various gas stations across the state.

In addition, radio and Internet ads with the *Don't Barrel Through Work Zones* theme will begin April 6 and run periodically throughout the summer months around heavy travel times. Plus, on April 10 the Laborer's Union will once again hand out work zone materials at various rest areas.

For a list of 2009 partners, go to *www.modot.mo.gov/operationorange*.

Cathy Morrison

Cathy Morrison

Shaun Schmitz

Cathy Morrison

No MOre Trash! Bash Scheduled for April

Spring into action this April and help clean up Missouri during the No MOre Trash! Bash 2009. No MOre Trash! Bash is a month-long litter-prevention celebration that encourages people to help clean up Missouri's roadsides and streams.

"Littering really adds up as far as costs to our environment, our economy and the beauty of Missouri," said Joe Jerek, coordinator of the No MOre Trash! campaign for the Missouri Department of Conservation. "Wildlife can be maimed or killed by litter, and it pollutes our forests, fields, streams, rivers and lakes. Litter costs Missouri taxpayers millions of dollars each year in cleanup efforts. And it's just plain ugly."

"We need your help this year to make Missouri more beautiful and keep it that way," said Stacy Armstrong, roadside management supervisor. "Do your part and help Missourians save millions in tax money."

Each year, MoDOT spends more than $5 million to clear litter along highways throughout the state. More than 3,900 Adopt-A-Highway volunteers and 3,500 Stream Team volunteers spend countless hours during the year to help keep Missouri beautiful, but litter still accumulates in streams and along roads. This April and beyond, be ever mindful of where you put your trash.

Cathy Morrison

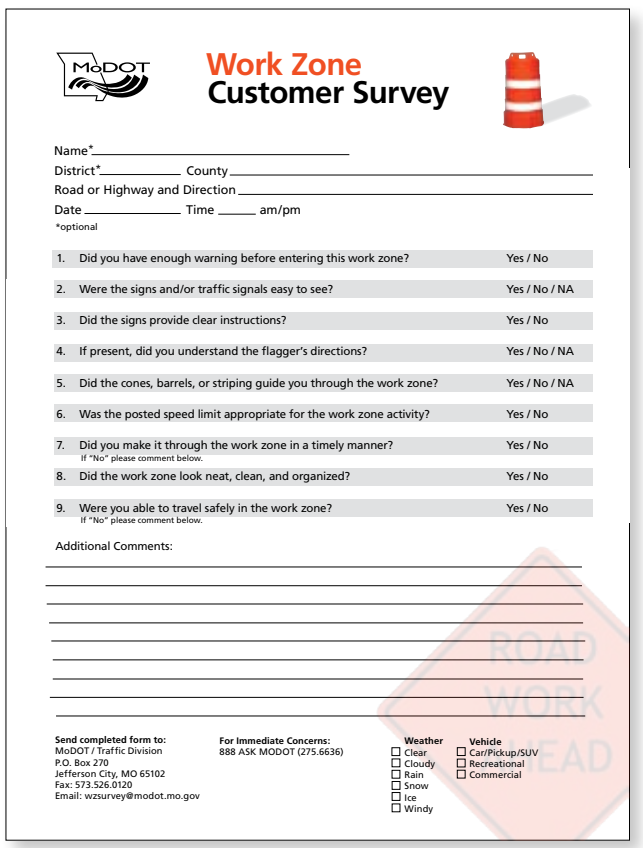
"We want people to realize littering isn't good for anyone," Armstrong said. "It costs Missouri millions of dollars each year – money that could be spent improving Missouri roads."

For more information about the Bash and how you can do your part, visit nomoretrash.org.

MoDOT Work Zones Making the Grade

As construction season draws near, work zones will be popping up across the state. Through a new online tool, MoDOT is using customer feedback to ensure these work zones are safe and efficient.

"Public feedback is critical in improving our work zones so we can keep the traveling public and our highway workers safe and move motorists through them as efficiently as possible," said Don Hillis, director of System Management.



MoDOT

Work Zone Customer Survey

Name*_____

District*_____ County _____

Road or Highway and Direction _____

Date _____ Time _____ am/pm

*optional

1.	Did you have enough warning before entering this work zone?	Yes / No
2.	Were the signs and/or traffic signals easy to see?	Yes / No / NA
3.	Did the signs provide clear instructions?	Yes / No
4.	If present, did you understand the flagger's directions?	Yes / No / NA
5.	Did the cones, barrels, or striping guide you through the work zone?	Yes / No / NA
6.	Was the posted speed limit appropriate for the work zone activity?	Yes / No
7.	Did you make it through the work zone in a timely manner? If "No" please comment below.	Yes / No
8.	Did the work zone look neat, clean, and organized?	Yes / No
9.	Were you able to travel safely in the work zone? If "No" please comment below.	Yes / No

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Send completed form to:
MoDOT / Traffic Division
P.O. Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102
Fax: 573.526.0120
Email: wzsurvey@modot.mo.gov

For Immediate Concerns:
888 ASK MODOT (275.6636)

Weather
☐ Clear
☐ Cloudy
☐ Rain
☐ Snow
☐ Ice
☐ Windy

Vehicle
☐ Car/Pickup/SUV
☐ Recreational
☐ Commercial

ROAD WORK AHEAD

Since Jan. 1, more than 70 people have weighed in on Missouri work zones via the MoDOT work zone customer survey at *www.modot.org/workzones/Comments.htm*.

Work zone visibility and traffic flow are two important factors in evaluating work zones. The public offers feedback on advanced warning, speed limit, timeliness and safety.

Results of the survey thus far show that 86 percent of our work zones are currently meeting customer expectations for visibility and cleanliness for items ranging from signs, cones, barrels and striping.

Nine out of 10 people stated that MoDOT work zones met traffic flow expectations. This measure evaluates how well the department meets public expectations of traffic flow in, around and through work zones on state highways.

"Public feedback helps MoDOT improve our work zones by minimizing work zone congestion and delays, despite increased traffic demand and volume of work zones in Missouri," Hillis said.

Visit *www.modot.org* for a current listing of all work zones. Let us know how we're doing so we can help keep travelers safe and moving while maintaining our roads and bridges.

Get Work Zone Information on the Traveler Information Map

by Matt Hiebert

Every winter, hundreds of thousands of Missouri citizens log on to MoDOT's Web site to check out road conditions on the Traveler Information Map. But once the snow and ice melts away, traffic to the map dries up a bit as well.

That's because a lot of people don't know they can get the latest work zone information from the map.

While web traffic in the summer will never have the huge jumps in visitors the map sees in winter, drivers can still benefit from the up-to-date information displayed around the clock on the application.

Want to know the latest on Route 5 work? There's a place you can go! Want to know the delay time on an interstate or other major route? Click your mouse. Want to see if a low water crossing is flooded? The map has that. Want to know how long it's going to take to clear an accident on Interstate 55? Yes, the map will have that, too.

It may be Missouri's number one tool for checking weather-related road conditions, but the map offers a lot more than that. You and your neighbors can get 24/7 work zone, flooding and incident information in one convenient location. And there's more to come!

Work Zone Crashes

continued from page 1

waiting rooms, the thousands of miles driven to get physical therapy and a host of other expenses incurred through three years of medical treatment.

"When I respond to an accident call now, I have even more compassion for the people involved than I used too," Schmidt says. "If there's one thing I want to get across to people, it's that everybody loses in an accident."

Since his work zone crash, Schmidt is especially concerned about improving work zone safety. He wants to share his story with others and will be featured on work safety radio spots this season.

His message to Missourians is simple, "Reduce your driving distractions and stay alert. I want to see a year when no one is seriously hurt in a Missouri work zone."

Seat Belt Rally

continued from page 1

on as Primary Safety Belt Partners. Supporters of this initiative include insurance agencies, hospitals, ambulance associations, medical associations, law enforcement and concerned citizens.

A 2008 survey shows that 76 percent of Missourians are buckling up – that number is virtually unchanged since 2004 and is consistently below the national average of 83 percent.

For more information on safety belt use and a primary safety belt law, visit the coalition's Web site at www.saveMOlives.com.

April Service Anniversaries

30 Years

Charles W. Smith	D2
Robert K. Newman	D3
Terry L. Stowell	D4
Vincent A. Boillot	D5
Roy G. Raithel	D5
Lonnie D. Cooper	D5
Randal G. Washam	D7
John D. Stepp	D8
Keith A. Pritchard	D10

25 Years

Carl A. Carder	D1
Ronald D. Ettinger	D1
Charles R. Kitchen	D2
Jeffrey W. Lewis	D2
James W. Sharp	D4
Thomas E. Bates	D4
Randall D. Potts	D5
Edward G. Carroll	D5
Michael W. Dunavant	D5
James E. Carr	D6
Russell L. Hogan	D7
Thomas A. Bitting	D8
Dana M. Garner	D8
Gail R. Hannaford	D8
Eugene L. Ahlers	D8
David M. O'Connor	D8
Ray L. Pasley	D8
Douglas H. Basham	D9
Darrell D. Heaton	D10
Stuart J. Denich	CO

20 Years

Teresa K. Glidewell	D1
John L. Blades	D1
Mark A. Wiley	D1
Douglas K. Mullins	D2
Douglas L. White	D2
Phillip D. Meredith	D5
Robert L. Galbreath	D5
Robert M. Russell	D5
Lisa A. Richardson	D6
Becky J. Goad	D8
Betty L. Shadwick	D8
David R. Amos	CO
Shirley K. Bock	CO
LeAnn C. Francis	CO
Andrew F. Goeller	CO

15 Years

Thomas C. Judah	D1
C. Joseph Pappert	D1
Kelly F. Kurtz	D1
David J. Liebhart	D2
Brad E. Watkins	D2
Bobby G. Boyles	D3
Simon M. Begley	D3
Joseph P. Collins	D3
Raymond L. Smith	D3
Brent L. McGlaughlin	D3
Robert R. Deters	D3
Deborah F. Lipper	D3
Teresa L. Zeiger	D3
David A. Bower	D4
Donald D. Huff	D4
Doug L. Sardeson	D4
Craig L. Burgett	D4
Jack E. Cunningham	D4
Priscilla L. Harris	D4
James B. Bentley	D4
Curt D. Kolb	D5
Donald M. Cox	D5
Richard L. Fennewald	D6
Jason D. White	D6
Jeff M. Divine	D7
Garry E. Brammer	D7
Terry M. Morgan	D8
Louis C. Trotter	D8
Larry D. Pierce	D8
Jimmy J. Couffer	D8
Eric J. Henson	D10
Jeffrey D. Jarrell	D10
Stevie A. Mount	D10
Anthony S. Lesslie	D10
Jerry L. Jackson	D10
Gary A. Brewer	D10
Stanley P. Hoelscher	CO
Thomas R. Honich	CO
Mary A. Jacobs	CO
Diane R. Roegge	CO
Sheri J. Stevens	CO
Mary J. Stratman	CO
Tina V. Vogt	CO
Leslie A. Wieberg	CO
David A. Wright	CO

10 Years

Scott L. Brelsford	D1
Ben L. Cox	D1
Darin J. Huitt	D1
Mitchell L. Willis	D1
Kendra M. Ezzell	D1
John P. Sprigg	D2
Geralyn R. Perrin	D2
Ronald D. Wilson	D3
Roy K. Niemeyer	D3
Dawn M. Miller	D3
Bedford E. Cline	D4
Gary L. Ludwick	D6
Charles P. Gray	D6
Lawrence Richmond	D6
Joseph A. Rocchio	D6
John W. Garner	D6
Onas E. Hart	D7
Robert L. Smith	D7
Bradley G. Mullings	D8
Mistie L. Williams	D8
Keith M. Maddux	D8
Jonathan E. Estes	D9
John H. Caldwell	D9
Daniel J. Autrey	D9
Michael J. Crudgington	D9
Amos P. Purcell	D9
Donald R. Good	D9
Brenda L. Hawkins	D9
Joseph F. Morris	D10
Gary A. Beauchamp	D10
Tommy G. White	D10
Scotty D. Earnheart	D10
Steven L. Smith	D10
Danny R. Heuring	D10
Shane A. Blackburn	CO
Shannon L. Lock	CO
Lynette R. Myers	CO
Donna J. Ruder	CO

5 Years

Mark A. Redding	D1
Aaron G. Cartee	D1
Stanley G. Schrock	D2
Deryl F. Gosseen	D2
Kenneth E. Ingersoll	D2
Robert D. Simmons	D2
Gregory T. Lyon	D2
Matthew G. Swisher	D3
Thomas C. Ragland	D3
Nancy J. Engelhart	D4
Kurt T. Bagley	D5
Jason P. Kerkmann	D5
Steven E. Scott	D6
Eugene Presley	D6
Scott D. Jensen	D6
Jeremy A. Belcavitch	D8
Bradley J. Rumfelt	D8
Danny W. Cook	D8
Benjamin W. Cummings	D8
Martin W. Hawkins	D8
Brian P. Dye	D8
Duane N. Johnson	D8
David E. Bell	D8
Rick G. Hamm	D9
Travis M. Sanders	D9
Roger W. Achurch	D9
Timothy L. Bowers	D9
Travis L. Crafton	D9
Justin W. Hills	D9
Edward S. Henderson	D10
William C. Abbott	CO
Terry W. Baker	CO
Julie A. Balkenbush	CO
Jessica A. Keathley	CO
Sally S. Oxenhandler	CO
Patricia D. Weekley	CO

In Memoriam

Active

Perry A. Seidel	CO	Feb. 7

Retirees

Ernest "Dago" R. Roesger	D5	Feb. 5
Bobbie C. Peterson	D8	Feb. 5
Ralph E. Bradshaw	D10	Feb. 6
Russell V. DeGraw	D2	Feb. 7
Richard L. Murphy	D1	Feb. 7
Thurman L. Todd	D10	Feb. 9
George W. Herron	D3	Feb. 13
Harry C. Snyder	D5	Feb. 13
Dale E. Glidewell	D1	Feb. 16
Raymond "Marvin" Brusha	D1	Feb. 25
Osker D. Johnson	D10	Feb. 28

February Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Fred Bolton	D3	30
Rodney Norman	D4	26
Donald Pearon	D5	31
Robert Racherbaumer	D5	31
Mark Hill	D6	25
Neil Schlichting	D6	40
Daniel Caruthers	D7	32
John Lacey	D7	23
Kevin Breesawitz	D8	24
Sandra Floyd	D8	12
Mark Davis	D9	25
Robert German	D9	19
Hossaingholi Houshmand	CO	14
Pauline Forck	CO	32
Ralph Knipp	CO	24
Sharon Distler	CO	31
Rebecca Roettgen	CO	24
Patrick McDaniel	CO	23

CO
Central Office

Treadwell-Martin Leaves Legacy of Change

by Kristi Jamison

After a long and progressive career in public service, Brenda Treadwell-Martin will retire from MoDOT, leaving at the end of April. As director of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division, many positive changes in the support, development and recruitment of employees; the creation of a more culturally aware workplace; and efforts to increase the employment of women and minorities have occurred.

"I have enjoyed working at MoDOT," Brenda said. "In particular, the most recent change in leadership put a healthy focus on the importance of nurturing a diverse workforce. Now we see the positive impact diversity has on our organization and the customers we serve."

At the same time, creating a more diverse workplace has had its own challenges. "Striking a balance for individuals that are impacted by diversity has been a challenge."

Through her pioneering efforts, she worked hard to develop programs to ensure MoDOT's diversity efforts could be comparable to those of Fortune 500 organizations. As a result, she administered diversity training to 70 percent of MoDOT employees. Also under her guidance, statistical data for MoDOT's Diversity Plan was automated to improve the accuracy of the report. Her division also developed and obtained approval from the Federal Highway Administration on MoDOT's five-year Diversity Plan to ensure federal funds for MoDOT projects.

Brenda was also instrumental in creating, implementing and leading the Employee Advisory Council, which gives employees opportunities to provide input on MoDOT's operation in three key areas: communication, diversity and policies.

The employment of women and minorities at MoDOT has also increased under her watch. Since the creation of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division, minority employment at MoDOT has increased by 33 percent to 9.3 percent after remaining at 7 percent for 16 years. The employment of women has increased 10 percent. Brenda also led a recent effort to resurvey MoDOT employees, giving them an opportunity to update their racial/ethnic background and to include more than one race.

In helping support, develop and retain employees, Brenda has been instrumental in developing MoDOT's Mentorship Program. She also contracted the use of a voluntary, online exit interview system to help MoDOT pinpoint reasons for employee turnover in order to help with future retention efforts.

EODD has also played an important role in recruiting new and potential future employees. Under her direction, MoDOT developed its first Internet/intranet Diversity Web site to explore non-traditional methodologies to contact, educate and recruit women and minorities.

She made sure MoDOT actively participated in programs at the secondary education level by bringing the national TRAC and Jefferson City Chamber of Commerce-Partner In Education programs to the department. These programs educate middle, junior, and high school students about the transportation field by providing adult role models and career exploration opportunities to school curriculum.

At the college level, she led efforts to expand the Cooperative Extension Program to provide students more hands-on experience with the department. She also extended this program by hiring and housing the first out-of-state civil engineer co-op students to increase MoDOT's applicant pool for civil engineer positions.

Brenda has also served as a liaison on behalf of the department for several entities, including the Governor Council on Disability, Governor Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board, Governor Mentorship Program, the State of Missouri Workforce Diversity Council and as diversity coordinator for Central Missouri Human Resources Association. She was also elected as the Missouri Coordinator for Region-7 American Association for Affirmative Action.

Prior to her career at MoDOT, she worked for the Department of Conservation, the University of Illinois and the Illinois Social Security Administration. Her career path at MoDOT took her from a senior human resources specialist to director of Employee Relations, and finally to her current position as the first director of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division, established in 2000.

She received the Governor's Employment Advocate Award for outstanding commitment to diversity at the local level and the American Association for Affirmative Action President's Award for her leadership, excellence and service at the national level. "Yes, embracing diversity is an integral component of our organization. We bring together 6,300 minds to administer state highways and other transportation modes. Without diversity, we just wouldn't be the top transportation agency."

Once retired, Brenda plans to have plenty of time to enjoy family (especially granddaughter Tamara) and travel … and oh, yes, maybe a little shopping, too.

Shaun Schmitz

Elvis, aka Jeff Lockwood, was spotted in the Hearing Room recently. With this and other performances, he hopes to raise enough money to keep him from having to lock lips with a pig. More importantly, all proceeds from the Kiss A Pig Contest will be donated to the Samaritan Center in Jefferson City.

Cathy Morrison

Members of the Lincoln University Dance Troupe performed at the Black History Month program in February. Dozens of employees attended the event and enjoyed sharing and experiencing more about the African American culture.

for more info

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Jefferson City, MO 65102

D1 Northwest

Last Month in the Northwest District

story and photos by M. Elaine Justus

Things started off with a bang on Feb. 17 with the District 1 mobilization to be the first in the nation to act on President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Our project was on a section of Interstate 35 south of Cameron scheduled for a concrete overlay.

Local television, KQTV, was on hand to interview District Engineer Don Wichern about the ARRA and what it means for Missouri and transportation.

The Northwest District's Blueprint Coalition is alive and well. We were able to assist the St. Joseph Youth Alliance's efforts to control under age drinking. MoDOT Senior Multimedia Specialist Cathy Morrison came all the way to St. Joseph on a gray, damp day to photograph area law enforcement officers for a billboard. Their stern image, along with the phrase, "Hosting a teen drinking party? We're selling tickets," will be seen all over St. Joseph in April.

Two Safe & Sound community briefings involving three bridges in Buchanan County were held in February. The photo at left shows Senior Office Assistant Lisa Kellison and Senior Customer Service Representative Marcia Johnson greeting people at one, while the photo at right shows Assistant District Engineer Tony McGaughy explaining to attendees the advantages of closing the road to redeck the bridge rather than staging construction.

The equipment pictured above is part of the Tool & Equipment Innovation competition scheduled in Springfield in late March. Shown is a design by the Lathrop building's Regional Maintenance Supervisor Larry Parsons and Maintenance Crew Leader John Shrewsbury. It's a bar they designed that slides on over Bobcat forks and allows you to push vegetation out from under guard rails easily and faster. It has represented a huge savings in time and manpower for the Northwest District, which is not only a significant cost savings, but frees people for other projects.

for more info

Community Relations Manager Elaine Justus
Phone 816.387.2353
E-mail margaret.justus@modot.mo.gov

3602 N. Belt Highway
St. Joseph, MO 64502

The View From the Road

by Holly Lea Murphy

Last month, we shared a photo taken of a couple of loose dinosaurs that were spotted from one of our state highways. This month's contribution was sent to us by Ed Angle, regional maintenance supervisor at our Albany building. He took this photograph in Gentry County along U.S. 136 about one-half mile west of Stanberry. He calls it "The Gentry County Alfalfa Express."

"The Gentry County Alfalfa Express" is what we call this unique arrangement of hay bales. They're located along U.S. 136 in Gentry County.

D2
NorthCentral

Over $20 Million to Revitalize Route 65

by Tammy Wallace

This summer Route 65 will see massive improvements spanning three counties as 54 miles of roadway will be resurfaced between Route 36 and I-70.

Three separate contracts have been awarded on this major corridor. Improvements include resurfacing, a bridge rehabilitation, smoothing existing pavement, providing safety upgrades such as paved shoulders and rumble strips, and even a partnering agreement with the city of Marshall to provide needed turn lanes.

During the past two years the district has focused attention on improving the condition of Route 36 and Route 63; this year, the emphasis is on Route 65.

Motorists traveling this busy corridor will see many orange cones and barrels this season as several work zones will be in place. Doing several projects simultaneously condenses the time motorists are affected by the construction, and everyone can enjoy the smooth ride and added safety benefits that much sooner.

Next year an additional 20 miles in Grundy County and 33 miles in Mercer County will receive the same improvements to bring all of Route 65 up to good condition.

Getting started - APAC-Missouri, Inc. crews work to replace expansion devices on the bridge over the Blackwater River in Saline County. The northbound lanes of this bridge will be rehabilitated with a new deck.

Ready to Go

The Economic Recovery and Revitalization Act has been a great boost for transportation statewide and for District 2. Those attending the March 10 Public Briefing were very interested in the list of projects planned to be accelerated or added to the STIP with recovery funding.

The big winner at the district level was the Alternate Route 63 project, which will begin about 15 months earlier thanks to additional funding. Contractor bids will be opened in May, so the project could begin as early as August.

As District Engineer Dan Niec spoke to the group, a particular interest was the $30 million for the minor road system in the northern part of the state.

A positive e-mail comment was received after the Briefing:

"Just a note to let you know I felt the meeting last evening was very informative and appreciate all of your efforts in putting it together. Dan did an exceptional job explaining the funding and projects. Thanks so much!"
Denise Bennett, Director
Macon County Economic Development

Dan had the opportunity to again present the Economic Recovery information later that same week during a meeting with governmental officials organized by the District's Planning Department.

Around 50 city and county officials, RPCs, legislators and others gathered to hear from several MoDOT representatives on 12 different topics. Some of those were:

- Economic Recovery Funding
- Statewide Transportation Program
- Safe & Sound Bridge Program
- Minor Roads Plan
- Cost Share Program
- Conversation for Moving Forward
- On & Off-System Bridges

The meeting was a good opportunity for the group to hear from MoDOT staff on current issues and projects.

for more info

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Miami Bridge Begins

Commuter lots and Web will aid motorists

Approval of a $14.8 million dollar contract to OCCI, Inc. of Fulton, Mo., makes it official - the Missouri River Bridge at Miami will begin partial rehabilitation later this summer, which will close the bridge for up to 12 months.

contractor to remove the overhead truss, decking and girders, leaving behind only the large piers in the river. When completed, the new bridge will be 26-foot wide (11-foot lanes with 2-foot shoulders).

The 1939 Missouri River Bridge at Miami with its steel overhead truss and narrow driving lanes make it a perfect candidate for partial rehabilitation.

Work on the bridge will begin next August and will be nearly identical to what MoDOT has done this year on the Missouri River Bridge at Glasgow.

MoDOT made a commitment to the communities to not close the Miami Bridge until after the bridge at Glasgow has reopened, which is ahead of schedule for the planned Aug. 4 opening date.

The partial rehabilitation calls for the

To help residents living near the bridge and/or who frequently use the bridge, the department will assist with carpooling options. One existing lot will be improved and two other temporary lots constructed.

Additionally, a web interface will be established to allow motorists a safe interactive web site to link residents with others in the community who have similar transportation needs.

Contractors build the new steel girder bridge deck at Glasgow.

D3 Northeast

From Winter White to Spring Orange

As winter transitions to spring, MoDOT transitions from snow plows to chip seals, spreaders and tractors. The most noticeable difference to Missouri drivers, though, is probably the colors of spring, especially green grass and yellow flowers. While drivers should be familiar with MoDOT's color of spring, orange, there will be many symbols to help remind them that work zone season has arrived.

This year, we asked some of our road crews questions about their wishes for work zone safety.

If you had a direct phone line to all drivers getting ready to go through your work zone, what would you say?

"Hi...this is Rich Arnold, Hannibal maintenance supervisor for MoDOT. Please pay attention and get off your cell phone... you are coming up on one of our work zones. The signs are telling you what lane to get in, and tell you to reduce your speed. Always pay attention to the car in front of you, and the workers on the road way. They may stop you, or the car in front of you, or step out in front of you. The workers are trying to make the road safer to drive on. Always be ready for the unexpected thing to happen. When you drive through a work zone at the posted speed limit, you can stop much faster and stay in control. Being able to stop faster could save someone's life."

What would you do to improve the work zone if you had all the money in the world? Johnny Fry, maintenance crew leader in the Mexico facility, responded: "We need three lanes on the major highways, so you can always close one down. US 54, I-70, US 63...any of them. I know we can't do that on secondary roads, but we need to veer them completely away from the work zone to make it safer for everyone."

Describe the scariest occurrence you have ever witnessed in a work zone. Marty Lincoln, resident engineer at the Mexico Project Office responded describing an incident that occurred about eight years ago: "I was working in an unusually configured interchange at US 61/24 near Taylor. There are three lanes, and the middle lane was marked as a work zone, directing traffic to one of the lanes on either side. Basically, the driver was inside the work zone in the middle lane heading right for me and another car was following her. She got to where she couldn't go anymore and was rear-ended. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured."

Branding the Avenue

Now that the Avenue of the Saints is four lanes from St. Louis to St. Paul, MN, MoDOT continues to work with its regional partners to bring awareness to the Avenue by implementing a branding campaign. In addition to already placed Avenue signs along the highway throughout Missouri and Iowa, MoDOT sign crews installed 325 Avenue signs above all northbound and southbound US 61 and US 27 signs from the St. Charles County to the Iowa state line.

Thomas Ragland, one of the sign crew who helped get the project done ahead of schedule, was a little disappointed when one of his family members hadn't taken notice of the signs. "We worked really hard to get them all done, but I guess it's good they are paying attention to the road and not the signs," he jokingly remarked.

Another friendly reminder that US 61 and US 27 are along the Avenue will be the Avenue symbol printed on the new state maps. District Engineer Paula Gough worked with Jay Bledsoe out of central office to ensure the logo would be visible on the map, adding to the branding implementation plan.

"The next step in branding the Avenue will be to work with the St. Louis District and Iowa to see how feasible it is to continue adding signage on top of the designated routes," Paula added.

Paula and her team will continue to seek ways to "brand" the Avenue.

Roger Page and Larry Cornelius were members of the sign crew who affixed 325 Avenue of the Saints signs to all US 61 and US 27 signs along the four-lane highway in northeast Missouri.

Students Rally for Change

High school students from Warren County R-3 in Warrenton (left) and Marion County R-2 in Philadelphia (below) rallied their legislators during the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety's Seat Belt Rally last month held at the Capitol in Jefferson City. Students in several schools throughout northeast Missouri presented their legislators with personalized petitions encouraging the passage of a primary seat belt law.

District Engineer Paula Gough fulfilled her charitable campaign commitment by assisting the signal crews with some important lighting projects last month. She is shown here with Signal Electrician Michael Laks changing bulbs on roadway lighting on the US 36/24 interchange west of Hannibal. At the end of the day, with assistance from Thomas Ragland and David Waterman, Michael and Paula relamped a total of 22 lights.

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D4
KansasCityArea

A Groundbreaking Performance

by Kerri Lewis

No Oscar winners here, but the kickoff for two significant projects has launched this construction season into gear with a groundbreaking performance. The Lexington Gap Project and the Warrensburg East Loop are underway to enhance Route 13 for motorists and the local communities.

Steve Porter

Pete spoke highly of the partnership between city and state officials during the Warrensburg groundbreaking.

The Lexington Gap Project

Windy conditions and cold falling rain in early February couldn't keep the shovels from turning the dirt during a groundbreaking ceremony for the Lexington Gap Project. Senator Stouffer, Representative Aull, Lafayette County officials, city officials from Higginsville and Lexington, representatives from the 13 Highway Coalition and MoDOT celebrated the kick off for the Gap Project with gold shovels in hand. More than 25 attendees were present to witness the ceremonial event that signified the beginning of an important project to bridge the gap of Route 13 near Lexington.

Kerri Lewis

City, county and MoDOT officials turned dirt to signify the start of the Lexington Gap Project.

Currently, the section of Route 13 near Lexington in Lafayette County is not ideal. Carrying approximately 3,300 vehicles per day, motorists heading north using Route 13 must use Route 24 around Lexington to reconnect with Route 13. To maintain system continuity, MoDOT will build a direct route for motorists using this route. A two-lane roadway will tie the northern four-lane divided section, which ended just south of Route 24, with the existing two-lane Route 13 to the south. This 3.1-mile extension unites the gap between the two sections and improves north/south traffic flow.

Steve Porter

With the soil freshly turned, the East Loop Project is under way.

Construction for the newly relocated Route 13 was awarded to Chester Bross Construction Co. out of Hannibal at a cost of $7,190,960. Amendment 3, approved by Missouri voters in 2004, has helped accelerate the schedule for this project, which is scheduled for completion in fall of 2010.

Warrensburg East Loop

Mother Nature rehearsed her script for another grand groundbreaking performance. Warmer than normal temperatures and not a cloud in the sky welcomed the more than 75 attendees to the groundbreaking ceremony for the Warrensburg East Loop Project.

United States Senator Christopher Bond spoke of the importance this project has for the city of Warrensburg. Others who spoke during the ceremony included Senator David Pearce, Representative Hoskins, Commissioner Brenner, Mayor DeFrain of Warrensburg, and MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. And with gold shovels in hand, the ceremonial turning of the dirt commenced for the relocation of Route 13 to the east of Warrensburg.

Safety, MoDOT's first priority, is the leading factor for relocating Route 13 to just east of Warrensburg. The ADT ranges from 6,700 to 21,350 throughout this portion of Route 13, with an accident rate two to eight times the statewide rate for roadways similar to this one. By building the new Route 13 around Warrensburg, the accident rates will decrease, making it safer for all motorists traveling through the area.

Construction has begun on the first leg of a new Route 13 east of Warrensburg and was awarded to Ideker Inc. of St. Joseph at $27,153,932. Known as the East Loop, the new Route 13 will move through-traffic away from stop-and-go congestion in downtown Warrensburg and will open by the end of 2010.

D4 Joins "A Call To Oneness" in Community Wide Prayer Rally For Jobs

by Gina Myles

On Feb. 25, D4 joined with a Kansas City area community based group "A Call to Oneness" in a Community Wide Prayer Rally for Jobs. The prayer rally was the kickoff ceremony for a Partnership for Job Readiness and Community Outreach in which D4 and "A Call To Oneness" join together to offer free CDL (Commercial Driver's License) training workshops for Kansas City area residents.

The rally held at Zion Grove Baptist Church in Kansas City had an estimated 400 people in attendance. As the jobless rate in the city and nation continues to rise, the rally emphasized how crucial it is for hope in a deepening recession. The prayer rally consisted of prayer, songs of praise and an outline of why the training workshops are being offered. MoDOT Assistant to the District Engineer Sharon Taegel and Community Liaison A.J. Byrd addressed the attendees explaining MoDOT's role in the training workshops. It is the goal of D4 (and "A Call to Oneness") to assist those who are interested in careers that require a CDL.

"A Call to Oneness" executive leadership is a proactive assembly of ministerial leaders committed to the betterment of life for the Kansas City community. In November of 2008 D4 Senior Management, Human Resources members and Community Outreach staff sat down with leaders of "A Call to Oneness" in an effort to develop strategies towards addressing employment challenges facing the community. The group coordinated a series of directives or outreach activities as a part of an "Employment Readiness Initiative" to help individuals become more employable, productive and self-sufficient by providing CDL training that will open doors of employment opportunities.

To the left, Jeff Wesley, Holmes Park maintenance supervisor and Pastor Darron Edwards of United Believers Community Church (below) speak to more than 400 attendees during the Call to Oneness.

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D5 Central

Staying Safe in Work Zones

by Holly Dentner

Every April before the construction season swings into high gear, MoDOT takes time to remind everyone of the risks involved with working on Missouri highways and encourage all motorists to use care as they pass through work zones. Cary Simcoe knows first hand the dangers MoDOT employees face when they're at work.

Simcoe is a senior maintenance worker at the Auxvasse maintenance building who's been with MoDOT for nine years. Last summer Cary was helping the striping crew as they worked on U.S. Route 54 in Callaway County.

"The striping train was moving through the work zone when the crew had to stop and make a repair," said Simcoe. "I was in the last truck with the TMA, with my seat belt on, of course. I sat there waiting, and all of a sudden it felt like someone grabbed me and shook me really hard."

When Simcoe looked in the rearview mirror, he saw a car smashed in the TMA unit on the back of his truck. The driver claimed he had been adjusting the radio and didn't see the MoDOT truck until it was too late.

Chris Engelbrecht

The highway patrol estimates this vehicle was going about 70 miles per hour when it hit the MoDOT truck.

"I am a firm believer in the safety measures used in work zones," said Simcoe. "That TMA absorbed almost all of the impact so I wasn't injured."

The TMA, or Truck-Mounted Attenuator, is one of the most important tools used to protect workers. When positioned in the proper location within the work zone, it can prevent errant vehicles from crashing into our equipment and personnel.

"I've had a close call before, but this was something I've never experienced," said Simcoe. "I would just remind everyone to slow down, keep your eyes on the road and pay attention."

Chris Engelbrecht

Simcoe was in this truck at the end of a striping train when he was hit. The truck-mounted attenuator absorbed the majority of the impact.

New Traffic Signal Lights Up Hallsville

Traffic flows through the intersection of Routes 124, B, and OO in Hallsville, where their first and only traffic signals were installed in February. At a ceremony on March 9, Mayor Carl South flipped the switch to activate the signals. The city partnered with MoDOT on the work and will enhance the intersection with crosswalks and additional pedestrian-related improvements that will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

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Construction Projects Receive Concrete Pavement Awards

Two mid-Missouri construction projects were recently honored with "Excellence in Paving" awards from the Missouri/Kansas Chapter of the American Concrete Paving Association (ACPA).

The awards were presented to MoDOT on March 5 to recognize work done on the U.S. Route 63 Gans Road Interchange in Columbia and the realignment of U.S. Route 50 in Cole and Moniteau Counties.

Susan Ball

Sr. Construction Technician Jerry Poulin, Sr. Construction Inspectors Jeff Madsen and Mike Dunavant, and Sr. Construction Technician Grant Lawson with the Gans Road Interchange Award.

The Route 63 interchange at Gans Road earned the award as a municipal street and intersection paved in concrete, meeting high quality standards for design, innovation, and workmanship. The $7.9 million diamond interchange project opened to traffic in November 2008.

"We are very proud to be recognized by the ACPA," said Construction and Materials Engineer Patty Lemongelli. "We know the new interchange will benefit motorists for many years to come."

The new interchange will accommodate increased traffic generated by the new development area in south Columbia along Route 63. It will also help alleviate some of the congestion at the Route AC interchange north of the new Gans interchange.

The Route 50 project earned the award for a concrete-paved rural divided highway with high quality workmanship, innovation and design. The new Route 50 is the first phase of a project to widen and relocate the highway.

"We are very excited that the ACPA awarded the new Route 50 for it's high quality engineering and construction," said Lemongelli. "This highway is designed to improve safety for the more than 10,000 motorists that use it each day."

The $30 million, 11-mile stretch of new four-lane highway runs from just west of the existing St. Martins interchange in Cole County to Route K, east of California.

The second phase includes relocating more than eight miles of Route 50 from Route K to west of California. The second phase costs $24 million and will be completed in 2010.

Cary Armour

Sr. Construction Inspector Dan Oesch, Resident Engineer Terry Imhoff and Intermediate Construction Inspector Jason Nilges with the Route 50 Award.

One Team Cleaning Up After the Storm

by Holly Dentner

When a winter storm coated Southeast Missouri with ice this February, communities in the Bootheel were quickly overwhelmed with the challenges of restoring power and assisting those in need. Tree damage in the area was so massive that mid-Missouri MoDOT crews headed south to help with the clean up.

Three teams were quickly formed from MoDOT's Central District, consisting of ten employees who traveled to Sikeston for a week and worked ten-hour shifts on Monday through Thursday.

"Our last crew finished their week on Thursday, March 12," said Eric Schroeter, assistant district engineer. "They were based in Sikeston and went wherever they were needed, but primarily worked along the right-of-way on Interstate 55."

The goal for Central District crews was to assist with the trimming or removal of trees and branches that fell along state routes. They also took equipment with them, including boom trucks, brush chippers and chain saws. Each crew also included a mechanic to assist and repair equipment if needed.

Even though MoDOT employees are divided into separate districts, they routinely cross district boundaries to work together.

"We asked for volunteers from our maintenance employees and had no problem getting the crews organized," said Schroeter. "Most MoDOT districts across the state helped out, which is fairly common for us to help one another get the job done."

Whether for highway maintenance or weather-related incident responses, MoDOT employees can quickly join forces to get a handle on the situation. Doing so better serves all Missourians because the resources can go where they're needed most.

D6
St. Louis Area

District "Top" Maintainer Retires After 39 Years

by Jack Wang and Kara Price

Denis Bigley at MoDOT in 1993

Denis Bigley at MoDOT in 2008

District 6 Maintenance and Traffic Operations Manager Denis Bigley has seen a lot of changes in his 39 years and two months with MoDOT. Namely, three name changes for the department.

"When I was hired and started working in February 1970, the department was called the Missouri State Highway Department," said Bigley. "Then it was changed to the \Missouri Highway and Transportation Department, and now it's the Missouri Department of Transportation." In his current job, he has had four different job titles in 22 years.

Bigley handing out safety awards.

Bigley has spent his entire career at MoDOT in the maintenance and traffic department. He recalls when District 6 covered 12 counties, plus the city of St. Louis. In 1988, because there was so much work in the urban area, the outlying counties were transferred to other districts.

Bigley also recalls the first department vehicle he was assigned. "The first state car was a 1965 Plymouth, two door," said Bigley. "It had no power steering, no air conditioning and no AM radio."

He has also seen how the equipment has changed over the years. "We've come a long way with tools," said Bigley. "It's grown by leaps and bounds, especially our progress with vehicles, and computers. Designs before computers were done on drafting tables by hand, and now it's all computerized."

Roy Bockenholt's retirement celebration in February 2009 as traffic supervisor after 35 years with MoDOT. From left to right, Denis Bigley, Christine Redhage, resident engineer-Fenton, and Bockenholt.

Bigley says the department has also changed over the decades in its approach to dealing with the public.

"MoDOT went from a secretive organization, to a more open organization willing to listen to our customers," said Bigley. At one time, even the proposed Right of Way and Construction Program was not something we shared with the public.

Two major events during Bigley's career in maintenance stand out. "The 20 inch snowstorm in 1982, and the flood of 1993," said Bigley. During the 1982 snowstorm, the St. Louis district offices were located in the suburb of Kirkwood, which happened to be about a mile and a quarter away from Bigley's home. "I remember walking down the middle of Kirkwood Road (Lindbergh Boulevard) to get to work during the snowstorm of 1982."

As Denis Bigley approaches retirement, he says he will spend more time attending movies, concerts and theater productions, and on the computer. But he's most looking forward to riding. "I got my motorcycle learner's permit," said Bigley. "At the age of 61."

He will miss working with his colleagues. "A lot of good people have worked for me. It made my job a lot easier," said Bigley. "I always went home feeling I've done something good for the traveling public."

Bigley receives a service award recognizing his 25 years at MoDOT in 1995. Pictured on the right is Previous Chief Engineer Joe Mickes.

Last day at MoDOT District Office at 329 South Kirkwood on April 2, 1993.

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D7 Southwest

First-in-Nation Economic Recovery Projects Include District 7 Job

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

Just moments after President Obama signed the Economic Recovery Act in Denver on Feb. 17, MoDOT kicked off construction of four projects touted as the nation's first under the economic recovery act.

The four projects are:

- Route 60--Barry/Lawrence/Christian Greene Counties in Districts 7 and 8: Construct alternate passing lanes from east of Chapell Drive in Monett to Kansas Avenue in Republic.
- Route 17--Miller County in District 5: Replace the Osage River bridge east of Tuscumbia.
- Interstate 35--Clinton County in District 1: Resurface northbound and southbound lanes from north of Shoal Creek to north of Route 116 near Lathrop.
- Interstate 55--Pemiscot/New Madrid Counties in District 10: Pavement rehabilitation on northbound and southbound lanes from I-155 to Scott County.

District 7's 26-mile project was awarded to Journagan Construction Company of Springfield for $8.7 million. Money from the stimulus package enabled MoDOT to accelerate the project to begin this spring instead of in 2011. Completion is scheduled for late 2009.

When completed, Route 60 will have passing lanes alternating between six eastbound and six westbound lanes, giving motorists from both directions ample opportunity to pass. Center turn lanes will be added in Billings and Marionville and between Billings and the Christian-Greene County line. The highway will also be resurfaced and edge line rumble stripes and centerline rumble stripes added.

"New passing lanes will reduce congestion and make Route 60 safer," said District 7 District Engineer Becky Baltz. "Southern Missouri is growing so quickly, and this highway carries heavy amounts of commuters."

Missouri will receive approximately $637 million for road and bridge projects and an estimated $150 million to address air, rail, transit, waterway and pedestrian projects throughout the state. That amount of work will create an estimated 14,000 jobs and have an estimated $2.4 billion impact on the state's economy.

Becky Baltz and D8 District Engineer Kirk Juranas kicked off the Route 60 project at the quarry where the rock for the job is being crushed.

Work Life Center Established for Employees

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

District 7 recently developed a Work Life Center on the D7 intranet site to mirror services employees and retirees already receive when they come to the district office.

The Work Life Center was created to serve employees from the day they walk in the door as an applicant to the day they retire. The objective of the "one-stop shop" is to develop successful people at work and assist employees in achieving a greater balance between their work and personal lives.

The center combines Business & Benefits, the Credit Union, Human Resources, Risk Management and Information Systems in one easy-to-locate section on the web site. The site includes information on everything from how to read your paystub to locating MoDOT's wireless hotspots.

The Resources page contains information on health services, personal finances and planning, retirement, tax filing and free legal forms, and education.

The Work Life Center is updated with new links regularly. If you have suggestions for things you'd like to see in the Work Life Center, please contact someone in one of the Work Life Center departments.

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Safe & Sound Gets Started in District 7

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

The bridge over Limestone Creek on Dade County Route Z is the first Southwest District bridge to be replaced under MoDOT's Safe & Sound bridge program. The bridge, built in 1962, closed Thursday, March 19, and will be closed for approximately 45 days.

Enviro Control of Stockton was awarded the contract to replace three bridges--the Limestone Creek and Glass Hollow Branch bridges on Route Z in Dade County and the Campbell Branch bridge on Route B in St. Clair County--for $1.1 million. The second Route Z bridge is scheduled to be replaced in July and the bridge in St. Clair County will be replaced in September.

The Safe & Sound bridge program improves 802 of the state's lowest-rated bridges in five years.

The Limestone Creek bridge is the first Safe & Sound bridge in the district to be replaced.

D8
Springfield Area

Bob Edwards

Angela Eden

Jeff Robertson

Bob Edwards

D8 at Work

A ceremonial bridge rail "unbolting" Feb. 23 (above) kicks off District 8's first Safe & Sound bridge project – on Polk County Route AA over Hominy Creek near Halfway. Participants include contractor Burk Bridge owner Larry Burk, right, and District Engineer Kirk Juranas (in orange hard hat).

Springfield Maintenance Worker Charolette Scott directs traffic on Kearney Street and Route 65 in Springfield (middle photo) Saturday, Feb. 21, when nearby I-44 was closed for 17 hours for demolition of a Glenstone Avenue bridge over I-44. The work is part of an interchange reconstruction project.

Working along I-55 near Hayti as part of a crew dispatched to help District 10 with cleanup (bottom left photo) after a January ice storm cut across southern Missouri are, from left, Roadside Senior Maintenance Worker Jesse Eidson, Marshfield Maintenance Worker Chris Wilson and Nebo Senior Maintenance Worker George Lane.

Ozark Senior Maintenance Worker Lee Long (top left photo) cuts tree limbs from above Route 160 near Rueter. He was one one of several crews from various shops who joined forces to remove debris from the January ice storm that hit southern parts of District 8.

Construction of Conway Welcome Center on I-44 Nears Completion

by Bob Edwards

The path old U.S. Route 66 once followed across southwest Missouri – in an era when travel on one of the nation's earliest paved highways was considered adventurous and romantic – can be seen in one color-filled glance at the floor inside the new I-44 Conway Welcome Center.

The Welcome Center in District 8 is nearing completion and is expected to be open in early May.

The terrazzo tile map, done up in turquoise, yellow and red by subcontractor Venetian Terrazzo Co. of St. Louis, shows every state that Route 66 traversed between Illinois and California.

"It's very durable," District 9 Resident Engineer Vicki Woods of the Rolla project office said of the mosaic with its sealed and polished surface.

That's a good thing. The Conway Welcome Center, at I-44 Mile Marker 111, is one of the busiest rest area/welcome centers in the state with an estimated 1.7 million visitors a year.

The old rest area was closed for reconstruction in June 2008, with Emery, Sapp and Sons Inc. of Columbia as the prime contractor. The new $10 million Welcome Center contains:

- New buildings with more than twice the number of restroom facilities as the old rest area. When it's time for cleaning, only half the restrooms need to be closed. "The facilities will always be open," Project Manager Chad Zickefoose said.
- A visitor information area, with large computer screens featuring National Weather Service radar and MoDOT's Traveler Information Map.
- A new sewage treatment plant.
- Triple the parking for big trucks at 75 spaces each on the westbound and eastbound side and improved lighting. Automobile parking is doubled.
- Route 66 "storefront" picnic shelters.
- Playgrounds with slides and climbing equipment as well as pet walking areas.

The main inspectors on the Welcome Center project from District 9 are Willow Springs Senior Construction Inspector David Prock and Rolla Senior Construction Inspector Darin Pryor.

Prock and Pryor deserve plenty of credit for staying on top of the project's many details, from paving to putting up buildings with state-of-the-art electronics to a ground-source heat pump system, Woods said. "They were quick to respond to the many challenges you face when you've got multiple contractors and multiple divisions within MoDOT (working on a project)."

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April Retirements

by Angela Eden

Bradleyville Maintenance Supervisor Danny Neal

Service: 31 years (Hired June 1, 1978)

Neal

Career: Construction Assistant, Branson Const., 1978; crew worker, Rueter Maint., 1978-1986; crew worker to senior crew worker, Bradleyville Maint, 1986-2000; maintenance specialist, Ozark Maint. 2000; maintenance supervisor, Bradleyville Maint., 2001-2009.

Biggest Challenge: Changing directions in maintenance every five years

Memorable Accomplishment: Building shoulders along Bradleyville area roads. "They've saved a lot of lives."

Quote: "I've enjoyed all the outside work," from plowing snow to chip seals and general maintenance of roads.

Post-MoDOT Plans: No more working weekends; spending more time working on his farm; fishing and hunting

Building Crew Senior Facility Operations Crew Worker Phyllis Schofield

Service: 21 years (Hired Aug. 1, 1988)

Schofield

Career: Crew worker to senior facility operations crew worker, 1988 to 2009 – all with the Building Crew.

Memorable Accomplishments: Building furniture for the District Office, including map holder in the lobby; updating the Material Safety Data Sheets

Quote: "I enjoyed building things. ... I enjoyed the classes where we learned about electrical wiring and propane."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Driving motorhome to Alaska with husband, Gene

"Talkin' Transportation" Call-In Radio Show

KWTO 560 AM, Springfield

10-10:50 a.m. Wednesdays

radiospringfield.com

D9
SouthCentral

Fourth Annual South Central District Employee Appreciation

The fourth annual Employee Appreciation was held in late February. The dedication and commitment of South Central District employees to Missouri citizens was celebrated during four days of Employee Appreciation at three different locations.

South Central District Engineer Tom Stehn presented certificates and lapel pins to 195 employees for low and no sick leave usage during 2007 and 2008. "This recognition has become a tradition in our district to recognize our employees who use little or no sick leave," said Stehn.

The South Central Tool and Equipment winners were also recognized and presented a certificate in appreciation for their innovations. The three emphasis areas and winners were:

Roadsides: Summersville Maintenance Crew, truck-mounted chainsaw box
Pavement Marking: St. Robert Maintenance Crew, drain marker
Bridge Maintenance: Ron Reynolds, Willow Springs Bridge Crew, bridge hand tool.

Following the award presentations, Tom joined the management team as they served lunch consisting of grilled pork chops, green beans, baked potatoes, bread and chocolate cake. Maintenance Engineer Henry Haggard, Belleview Regional Maintenance Supervisor Brian Long, Willow Springs Regional Maintenance Supervisor Rich Elijah Willow Springs Maintenance prepared the meal with help from Supervisor James Bradford and Edgar Springs Regional Maintenance Supervisor Steve Heavin.

"This yearly event is a great opportunity to thank our employees for the service they provide to the people of Missouri, recognize them for accomplishments and build a stronger team," Stehn said. "I believe everyone enjoyed the event and I appreciate everything they do."

Pavement Marking Category Winners: St. Robert Maintenance Crew Member Eugene Blankenship and Regional Maintenance Supervisor Frank Baker

Roadside Equipment Category Winners: (left to right) Tom Stehn, Summersville Maintenance Crew Members Buddy Terrill, Ray Thomas, Steve Mayberry, Kerry Grogan and Bernie Cook

District Engineer Tom Stehn places a grilled pork chop on West Plains Maintenance Worker Leroy Devonshire's plate.

Financial Services Specialist Marsha Lovan and Credit Union Manager Shirley Kinserlow took the opportunity to sign primary enforcement safety belt cards during their appreciation event.

Bridge Maintenance Category Winner: Willow Springs Bridge Crew Member Ron Reynolds (left)

First South Central Safe & Sound Bridge Under Construction

Crews with Contractor L. Krupp Construction, Inc., of Ellisville, Mo. began work on the Route 17 bridge over the Eleven Point River in Howell County on Monday, March 2, just after 7 a.m. The bridge will be closed for two months during construction to replace the bridge deck.

The Route 17 bridge was the first of 36 bridges in the South Central District to be repaired or replaced through MoDOT's Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program.

The bridge over Louse Creek on Route E in Oregon County was the second Safe & Sound bridge to receive a deck replacement. Crews with Joe's Bridge and Grading, Inc., began removing the bridge deck the week of March 30 and the closure will last 45 days.

For more information about the Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program visit www.modot.org/southcentral and click on the Safe & Sound 800 Better Bridges icon.

The bridge over the Eleven Point River in Howell County on Route 17 was the first bridge in the Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program under construction in District 9.

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D10 Southeast

Spreading the Word: Operation Orange

Last year, Operation Orange was in full swing during National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week—and this year is no different. Similar to last year, D10 has been actively asking cities, businesses and organizations to partner in raising awareness of work zone safety. It is D10's hope to have as many groups as possible participating this year, by turning their landmarks and outside building lights orange.

In addition to the area businesses and organizations that "went orange" last year, another important Southeast landmark also gleamed orange as part of Operation Orange—the Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge in Cape Girardeau. A special Operation Orange Bridge Lighting Ceremony was held at the Old Mississippi River Scenic Overlook to honor the men and women who serve the public in work zones and to remind us all of the importance of slowing down in work zones. A similar ceremony will take place this year to honor employees who currently serve, and those who have passed on.

The Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge, above, was aglow during Work Zone Safety Week in 2008. The bridge will be lit orange again this year. Last year, during the Operation Orange Bill Emerson Memorial Bridge Lighting Ceremony, at left, eight work zone channelizers each held a hard hat, vest, and name plate representing the lives lost in work zones in District 10.

Southeast District Answers Guard Cable Questions

'Frequently Asked Questions' Posted Online

The guard cable system on I-55 was not installed in the median. If guard cable had been installed in the median, it would have been less durable in situations when the soil is wet, as pictured above.

The guard cable system is one of the latest added safety features to Southeast Missouri's roadways. Since it is new to the area, it is understandable that there are questions about the cable system, its functionality and uses.

One of the most common questions about the cable system in Southeast Missouri is "why are the guard cables not placed in the center of the median?"

Project Manager Andy Meyer explained that the cable systems specified on Interstate 55 and Route 67 are an improvement on the previous design. When a vehicle hits the cable, the cable stays up and the posts will bend. Each post has a metal sleeve installed in a four-foot concrete footing, allowing for quick replacement after an accident.

"However, benefits of the system would be lost if the ground was not stable," said Meyer. "When the median is wet and the soil is saturated, a system with the guard cables placed in the center of the median would not be as durable."

Another common question is, "how close was the guard cable installed to the passing lane?"

The cable was installed eight feet from the inside stripe of the passing lane. The average car is less than six feet wide and the average truck is less than seven feet. Essentially, the width of another lane exists between the passing lane and cable system.

For more answers to questions about the guard cable system in the Southeast District, please visit www.modot.org/southeast, and view the Guard Cable FAQ document.

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Recent Retiree in D10

Doris Moore retired March 1 after 23 years with MoDOT. Moore was a Maintenance Crew Leader.

Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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Additional copies are available upon request. Suggestions, questions and comments are always welcome.

Please share this publication and recycle it after reading.

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Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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Winners of Battle of the Belt Challenge Announced

story by Kara Price, photos by Cathy Morrison

You're Never Too Cool to Buckle Up. That was the message of the winning video for the 2008 Battle of the Belt challenge.

For the third year, Missouri high schools competed against each other to increase safety belt use and save lives. Participating schools launched an educational campaign on the importance of safety belt use prior to performing surprise safety belt checks. They also had an opportunity to submit a 30-second public service announcement.

More than 125 Missouri high schools participated in the 2008 Battle of the Belt challenge. Statewide winners, pictured on the right, were announced at a special awards presentation on March 16 in Jefferson City. The winners were:

- St. Joseph Academy (St. Louis) - Highest Overall Seat Belt Usage
- Blue Eye High School - Most Improved Seat Belt Usage
- Washington High School – Video/ Public Service Announcement

"Eight out of ten teens killed in Missouri vehicle crashes each year aren't buckled up," said Leanna Depue, chair of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety's executive committee. "Through education, competition and fun, the Battle of the Belt competition can make a difference with Missouri teens and save lives."

The top video entry features several students in their cars buckling up to their favorite music. The video, produced at Washington High School, reinforces that 'you're never too cool to buckle up.' It can be viewed at *saveMOyouth.com*. Washington High School will receive a cash prize and the award-winning video will air statewide this year.

The winning video was featured at the presentation, and checks and trophies were presented to the student creators as well as the two schools that were most successful in their peer safety belt checks and educational campaign. American Family Insurance generously provided the prize money for the competition.

At the award presentation, Depue pointed out that the statewide winners are not afraid of a challenge. "They know the importance of buckling up, and have the prize money to prove it," Depue said. "Congratulations to these schools. Their hard work and dedication have paid off."

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15-20 years old. Results of a 2008 survey among Missouri teens indicate 48 percent of teens are not wearing seat belts.

For more information on Battle of the Belt and the 2008 winners, or to sign up your local high school for the 2009 challenge, visit www.saveMOyouth.com.

Buckle Up and ARRIVE ALIVE!

Lt. John Hotz, MSHP; LeAnna Depue, MoDOT; and Deana Dothage, American Family Insurance; present prize money to the winning high schools.